1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

tinuation of African cultural traditions was not easy, certain things did persist. While the material facts of the life of the slaves was at once subordinated to European patterns — in dress and implements and to a certain extent in housing, for example [33] — yet in other matters they could live as they had lived in Africa. Thus one account of the time, quoted by de Vassière,[34] tells how the slaves carried on communal hoeing, timing their strokes to the rhythms of songs that begged some favor of their visitor, or to songs of praise (and, when the white observer was not present, undoubtedly also singing songs of derision), in the characteristic African fashion that, as will be seen, has survived in Haitian peasant life to this day. Similarly their traditions of cooking, of eating, of fixing the time for their meals (despite St. Mery's comment that "the Negro has no other rule of eating than the demands of his appetite"), of respect for their elders; their attitudes toward death and their rituals of burial, their dances, their songs, and, above all, their non-Christian religious beliefs, all continued to be stamped with the mark of Africa.[35] On the other hand, opportunities to learn and imitate French customs were by no means neglected, for the prestige of the masters filtered through the ranks of the slaves until it reached even the field-hands, for the nearer in service the Negro was to the person of his master, the more Europeanized was his behavior and the prouder he was and the more he exploited his opportunities to follow European patterns of habit.[36] Not only did the house-servants imitate French dances,[37] but we are told how in Martinique, for example, all the slaves were taught these figures.[38] In the field of religion, also, the efforts of the Church to capitalize the royal edicts which made baptism of the slaves compulsory were far from vain, at least in so far as the outward manifestations of their acceptance of the faith were concerned. Writings of the time, however, do not omit comment on the discouragement of the missionizing Fathers who seriously undertook this task, because too often

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1936) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3

the baptism of their converts was followed by serious lapses from the faith, especially under conditions of stress.[79]

One of the most revolting aspects of the institution of slavery, wherever found, is the cruelty with which the suppression of human individuality is prosecuted. In this the French colony of Santo Domingo was no exception, as the list of more ingenious punishments, aside from the more usual ones such as whipping, which were devised to keep the slaves in line, demonstrates.[80] What is more important here are the defenses the Negroes built up against them. Recourse to suicide was especially common, and though the popularly accepted explanations for this range between the desire of the slave to destroy himself because he knew he was valuable property of his master, and the conviction that suicide was one way of achieving his return to the African homeland,[81] there is no reason to assume that, following African tradition, the belief that the ghost of a helpless slave could through suicide become powerful for evil and thus wreak his vengeance did not also figure.[82] But equally widespread in all the New World were the allied weapons of revolt and escape.

Both in the experience of the individual slaves and in the history of New World slavery this tendency to revolt began early. In the former case, many tales are told of how on the march to the African coast, or in the slave barracoons, or on board the slave-ship, the possibility of a desperate dash for freedom had always to be guarded against.[83] Concerning the latter, it is not generally known how early in the history of Negro slaving revolts did occur. The Negro slave-trade began with shipments of slaves to Haiti in 1510; the first slave uprising in Haiti, in 1522, thus took place only twelve years after the commencement of the traffic.[84] In the New World possessions of Spain eleven other rebellions are recorded between the years 1522 and 1553, of which those of 1533, 1537, and 1548 occurred in Santo Domingo.[85] During the following century two revolts took place, one at Port de Paix in 1679

1; Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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servation when, for example, the baptismal rites which received into the Church the children of known active participants in *vodun* ceremonies were witnessed. It became even more convincing when experience taught that the best place to encounter an elusive *hungan* or *mambu* was at early Sunday-morning mass. Only when it was realized that no dichotomy exists in Mirebalais between Catholicism and *vodun*, but that both are necessary if all the supernatural beings that control man and man's destiny are properly to be worshipped, was a true perspective obtained.[13]

There are certain Protestant sects which have been increasingly successful in making converts among the Haitian people, particularly in the north, whose adherents stand in strong hostility to *vodun*. A type of Protestantism that has had the best reception is one comparable to the "shouting" sects of the United States and the British West Indies, where the appeal through patterns of possession, dancing, and other aspects of ritual close to the familiar African forms of behavior is evident and relatively little psychological shift is needed to make membership in such a church acceptable.[14] The Protestant church in Mirebalais, however, is more sober. It commands only a very small proportion of the townspeople, and draws even fewer from the surrounding countryside, while the Catholic voduists look upon it with a scorn that is exemplified in the answer to a question about the ritual of Protestant funerals: "*Moun chita, chanté zhymnes*— People sit, and sing hymns!" Two or three well-substantiated cases of conversion to Protestantism came about because, despite the sacrifices made to the inherited *loa* and the prayers to the saints, these individuals continued to experience ill fortune, until in desperation the Protestant minister had been called to banish the family *loa*, to cut down the sacred trees on the family habitation, and to destroy the house of worship, with the objects in it. These deeds of "desecration" were, however, followed by no renewed disasters, and while from the point of view of

1: Herskovits E-4, 5 (1934) 1937 SV3 Haiti SV3
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the voduists this is not regarded as decisive proof of the power of Protestantism, for those immediately concerned it is held sufficient.[13]

What, then, of the attitudes held by voduists toward the Catholic Church? The correlation of Catholic ritual with *vodun* practice made by Haitians is of utmost significance in this connection. In discussing the Church service, it was pointed out that church bells announce mass or any other rite, and this, it was explained, is for Legba — *" Toute cloche c'est pou' Legba, même l'église, oui* — All sounding of bells is for Legba, even in church," for he must be notified so that he can " open the gate " for God, Jesus Christ, and the saints. *" Nou' même nou' connai' ça. C'est Bon Dieu crée tout* — You yourself know that. It is God who created everything." It was also recounted how when the priest preaches, he is possessed by the *mystères* of the sacred Trinity, for does he not gesticulate and become excited like any other possessed person?

Furthermore, it is believed that Gede, Ogun, and Damballa " are always at the church," often insisting that their worshippers take communion. Indeed, occasionally the *loa* of a woman may demand a Church marriage from a man to whom she is a *placée*. The sacraments of baptism, first communion, marriage, confession, and extreme unction are received by members of the *vodun* cult, though, as will be seen, when voduists confess, they say nothing of their *loa*. The *hungans* themselves " are most often at the sacred table to take communion," and one particular *hungan* not only attended mass, but was seen continually employing his rosary in the *vodun* ceremonies at which he officiated. While Haitians from the southern peninsula stated that the *hungans* there do not go to church, it was pointed out at the same time that all other voduists attend regularly.

The principal resentment held by Mirebalais voduists against the Church is for the cost of Church rites, and for the

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

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And yet the things that survived were able to do so, in certain respects, because of the particular brand of thinking of the colonial masters. Why has so much of the African past survived in Haiti when it has been all but obliterated in the United States? The answer lies primarily in the Catholic background of the Europeans who controlled the colony—first the Spanish, and then the French. The Catholic Church regarded every slave as a soul to be saved, as a complete and finished man except for salvation. And though it was an official of the Church who is alleged to have suggested African slavery in the New World,[3] the Church itself took the view that the differences between the slave owner and the slave were only worldly and transient things. The Church did not insist on washing out of the African mind everything that was there. It regarded its mission as that of supplying the single quality that was lacking—salvation. Its attitudes during the past four hundred years in Haiti have been vacillating and erratic; it has often pressed for destruction of the African cults; but on the whole it has been satisfied with conversion.

The Protestant churches in Haiti, on the contrary, have demanded that their converts become new people. They have forbidden their adherents to take any part in non-Christian rituals or other activities—including even the dance. They have presented them with a simple and painful choice.

These were the essential attitudes that prevailed during slavery days in the United States. In the beginning, while plantation owners fought against church activities among the Negroes, the church and the plantation owners were largely united in their war against "heathen" practices. Africanisms which might have either died in due course or persisted were stamped out with Puritan fervor. Significantly, it was in French-Catholic Louisiana that African-style drumming, singing, and dancing survived in the United States to the beginning of this present century.

The Catholic attitude of tolerance-by-necessity in Haiti won for it most of the country's four million souls. Today, many a Haitian who participates in the rites of Vodoun on Saturday worships in a Catholic chapel on Sunday.

Such sporadic efforts as were made to wipe out African memories in Haiti were unsuccessful. Slowly the uprooted slaves found a common denominator. The peoples of different origins developed a common language based on the French spoken by the masters. Their different religious systems merged one into another.

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The necessity for adaptation and amalgamation produced a cultural hybrid of an energetic and vital kind. By the beginning of the nineteenth century the people of African descent in Haiti were a cultural alloy, fired

[3] [Bartolomé de Las Casas. Cf. P. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1958) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

in the services. In the court, the bases of four sacred trees . . . are surrounded by circles of masonry [low brick walls]. These *reposoirs* are inhabited by the *loa* Legba, Ogoun, Loco and Saugo.[5]

There is little in Aubin's description to suggest that hounfors were much different a half century ago from what they are today. He errs in identifying the "thunder stones" solely with Damballa. But his eye for detail was acute. In 1950 a mambo in the neighborhood of this hounfor described by Aubin affirmed that some of the loa stones and old coins which he mentioned are still to be found among the properties of a hounfor in the Cul-de-Sac Plain. Others were lost in one of the cleric-inspired raids which despoiled cult temples of drums and other paraphernalia about fifteen years ago.

Many services are held outside the hounfor and the peristyle. Some rituals, such as animal sacrifices and "talking to the loa below the water," may take place some distance from the cult buildings. Indeed, various Vodoun ceremonies may be held at waterfalls, at the seashore, in sacred groves, in ordinary homes, in a boat at sea,[6] or under a sacred tree.

The rites of the hounfor are almost without number. They are associated with the supplication or conciliation of virtually countless deities, each of which has his own special service. There are services in multitudinous combinations and permutations for the dead, for twins, for albinos, and for unborn children. There are ceremonies for the elevation of hounsi and for initiation, smoke and fire ordeals, and tests of other kinds. There are *mangé loa* (feasts for the deities) and *mangé morts* (feasts for the dead). There are services for the sick, for the crops, and for the harvest. In one context or another, Vodoun relates to nearly every aspect and phase of life—and its counterpart, death. Since every region, every locality, and, in fact, almost every hounfor has developed its own ritual out of the common materials, it is possible to see hundreds of ceremonies without ever seeing precisely the same one twice. Yet the common elements bind them all together.

One such prime element is the possession, the "mounting" of the human body by one of the deities. Possession is a psychological phenomenon common to the rites of many cults throughout the world. It is known in Asia, Africa, Europe, and America. It is not the unique property of the African and his Haitian descendant. In the United States it is a commonplace not only among certain Negro cults but certain white cults as well. The United States Negro had ample West African inspiration for his seizures in the church and at the baptism. The intellectual meaning of these seizures has changed, as have their outward forms to a measurable extent, but their emotional content has not altered.

[5] [Translated from the French of Aubin, En Haiti, pp. 57-59. Cf. p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]
[6] [Footnote appears on p. 349, Category 116.--Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

In Haiti the possession takes many forms, according to the nature of the deity who has entered the body, and depending on whether the possessed person has learned to "control" that deity. The possessing, or "mounting," of the possessed individual is manifest proof of the loa's existence and his constant proximity. Vodoun is built upon the premise of the existence of loa, and the possession is the instrument of direct contact and of constant proof of the loa's imminence.

Although much of Vodoun is cast in the Dahomean mold, it is no longer what it was originally in Dahomey. Many of the original deities of the Dahomean Earth pantheon, the Sky pantheon, and the Thunder pantheon have survived. Others have been forgotten, but in their place there has grown a vast array of loa, recruited partly from the Yoruba deities and perhaps from deities of other West African tribes. By far the largest group has come into existence in Haiti—loa whose names, at least, probably would go unrecognized in West Africa.

There have been prolific intrusions into Vodoun from the rites of the Catholic Church, though they have not affected the general framework of the system. The original Dahomean supreme being, Nananbuluku, is nearly forgotten; in her place the Christian God is named in many a Vodoun service. Yet, though God is the supreme creator, giver, and taker, it is the loa who must be supplicated and mollified. Most important Vodoun rituals are begun under the supervision of the *prêt' savane,* or "bush priest," who leads off with brief prayers from the Catholic rites. While the Catholic Church itself rejects any direct part in Vodoun, the self-tutored prêt' savane, unordained and unsponsored by the Church, brings elements of its theology into the hounfor. The origins of the prêt' savane are not clear. But there is little doubt that his place in Haitian life became assured during the years of conflict between postrevolutionary governments and the Church of Rome. After the slave revolts of 1791, the priests of the French colony fled from the scene or went into hiding along with the other white colonists. From the date of Haitian independence throughout the following half century, Haiti was "in open schism from the Roman Catholic Church."[1] Some Haitian presidents were friendly toward the Catholic Church; others even had the objective of making Catholicism a state religion with the president at its head. Henry Christophe, for example, made the Catholic Church official but stipulated that ecclesiastical decrees must be approved by the president. Alexandre Pétion's constitution for southern Haiti (the country was divided) also established the Church as official but laid upon it strong restrictions.

Leyburn points out that in 1814 there were in Christophe's kingdom only three priests, one of whom Christophe had named archbishop. Dur-

[1] Leyburn, The Haitian People, p. 119. Cf. p. 349, category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

one. Sometimes a loa who is making life too hard for a devotee will be retired without a replacement. The "washing of the head" must be accompanied by ritual safeguards, and all possible circumstances must be taken into account by the officiating cult priest. There are many stories of people who became mentally deranged as a result of the removal of their loa from their heads.

The mait' tête must also be removed from the head of a person who dies. Should this not be done, the spirit of the deceased will go to reside "below the water" and may cause trouble for the family. This loa is usually transferred to a special jar as a temporary resting place, and later perhaps into the head of another member of the family.

Though the loa is a powerful ruling force in the life of the individual, the human "horse" has controls over his deity too. He may reproach or admonish his loa for bad behavior or for failing to protect him. He may expose the loa's irresponsibility in public through the use of songs in religious rites. And though the loa is frequently encouraged to "enter," steps may be taken to restrain him from possession. This is called *marré loa* —"tying the loa." A woman may "tie" her loa by fixing a hairpin in her hair in a special way. A man may do it by placing his hands in cold water.[3]

Nevertheless, the loa are always lurking in the background. They are a constant and dramatic element in the religious life of the people. They may sometimes be controlled by the houngan, but they are an authority stronger than the priesthood. They give advice, courage, consolation, and status to their followers. They add much to an otherwise hard and ungenerous environment and evoke remembrances of Africa from which the Haitians' ancestors were uprooted. They can also cause concern and anxiety; for the loa are not always benevolent, and they are frequently unpredictable.

Many of the loa are ancient deities, sib-founders and ancestors who loom out of a misty, half-forgotten past. Nananbouclou, Legba, and Ayida Wèdo have been known for many lifetimes in Dahomey. Chango, Ogoun, and Loko were old spirits in Nigeria before the first slave ships sailed from Africa to the New World. Their names and many others in present-day Hăiti come from an ancient lore. They recall places, tribes, and old kingdoms from Senegal in northwestern Africa to the heart of the Congo. They are a bond which holds the people of Haiti to Africa. In the mountains people sometimes say, "Haiti is the child of Dahomey," or "Haiti is the child of Guinée." The gods divide their time between their Haitian and their African children.

Yet in some respects the Haitians' concept of their loa is no longer purely African. The African religious patterns have been infiltrated by the lore

2: Courlander B-8 (1827-1965) 1960 SV3 Haiti SV3

of the Catholic Church and fused with old folk beliefs of Europe. In Dahomey, which was the wellspring for much of Haiti's culture, there was no supreme deity quite like the one introduced to the slaves by the missionaries. There was a pantheon of gods with Mawu and Lisa at the top. They were children of a common parent, Nananbuluku. None of these deities was strictly comparable to our idea of a supreme being. Nananbuluku survives in Haiti as Nananbouclou or Nananbélécou, one of many loa. Among the neighboring Yoruba the high god was Olorun. Like the Dahomean Mawu and Lisa, Olorun was quite remote from the lives of men. The gods who were invoked and placated were the several hundred *orisha* created by Olorun. The nearby Ashanti people had a simpler pantheon, with the sky god Nyame supreme among them.

In the present Haitian concept of the supernatural, God is at the very apex of the pantheon, though he is distinctly of another order. His power as the supreme source of all things is fully recognized. A Haitian song, associated with Vodoun ritual but of probable recent origin, goes:

> C'est Bondieu qui voyé moin, quand li vlé moin l'apprend. [Ex. 37]
> It is God who sent me, when he wants me he'll take me.

Another song, from the Guinée service, goes:

> Oh, Kitta, oh so'ti nan dleau, li tout mouillé!
> Oh, nen point houngan pasé Bondieu nan pays-ya! [Ex. 36]
>
> Oh, Kitta comes out of the water, he is dripping wet!
> Oh, there is no houngan in this country greater than God!

Although it is recognized, or at least stated, that God is a supreme force, God is not regarded as the entire supernatural force of the world. In many Vodoun services the houngan may invoke, as separate categories of the unseen, the loa, the dead, the *marassas* (twin spirits), and God. Haitians do not have a consistent schematized picture of the supernatural world. God comes first, but (as in West Africa) he is less immediate than the loa. He is identified with destiny; yet within the framework of that destiny man's lot can be bettered or worsened through dealings with the dead, the baka and lou-garos (demons and vampires), and the cult priests.

In many of the folk tales of Haiti, God appears as another character in a cast which may include as protagonists animals, loa, Christian saints, and ordinary men and women. One such tale is about a visit which all the dogs decided to pay to God. They started off through the woods together, but one of them was distracted by the smell of carrion. He left his friends for a brief time, found the carrion, and ate some of it. Then he hurriedly joined his companions again. Together they came to God's house and were admitted to the parlor, where they sat around making polite conver-

2: Courlander B-5 (1937-1955) 1960 SV2 Hait SV2

The importance of water in Vodoun has a fundamentally West African character. Among the Yoruba and the Ashanti and in Dahomey, for example, water rites are a significant aspect of religious ritual. Herskovits notes the frequency of religious pilgrimages to streams in West Africa.

> In one instance, at Abeokuta, a bedecked procession of worshipers left a shrine atop a high hill, followed a long path to the riverside over two miles away, and returned before the ceremonies could be carried out at the shrine of the god. On one occasion, in Dahomey, the bed of the sacred stream run dry was "filled" from nearby wells so that this water could be ritually redrawn for use in an especially important ceremony. Among the Ashanti, pilgrimages to Lake Bosumtwe and other sacred bodies of water regularly occur. And it is on such occasions that the spirit of the river or lake or sea manifests itself, by "entering the head" of the devotee and causing him to fling himself, possibly possessed, into the water.[8]

So it is also in Haiti, where possession at the river's edge may cause the devotee to leap into the river. At Saut d'Eau, possessed persons plunge into the waterfall without regard for their safety, being in the care of the loa who have mounted them.

Into this water complex the Christian rite of baptism has been easily absorbed, providing merely a new act of veneration for water and its properties. In the Haitian mind baptism is not far removed from the *lavé tête* ritual, the washing of the head, or the *rafraîchi tête*, the "refreshing" of the head, both of which are acts in propitiation of the loa.[9] So related is the baptismal concept in the Haitian mind, that the term "baptize" is used to describe the lavé tête; it is said that the loa is being "baptized." So also are drums "baptized," not to mention yams, and even the hounfor itself.

Marriage to a Loa

Although the term *hounsi* (spirit wife, or wife of the spirit) is applied to a large class of servitors of the Vodoun temple, only a small number of servitors ever pass through rites which give them a husband-wife or wife-husband relationship with a loa. Reasons for these mystic marriages vary, but usually the rituals take place upon the prescription of a cult priest who interprets the will of the deities concerned. Most of the mystic marriages of which I have heard have taken place in the general area of Port-au-Prince and the Cul-de-Sac Plain. In some other areas of Haiti it appears that no such rites have taken place locally within the memory of the elder inhabitants. One aged man living near Belladère declared: "It [marriage to a loa] is impossible. People serve loa, they do not marry them. A man does not marry his burro. A loa

8 [Herskovits, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 233. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

9 [It is of interest to note the perseverance of traditional attitudes toward water rites in certain negro cults in the United States. River baptism often is attended by ecstatic seizures in familiar form. Cf. p. 351, Category 116. -- Analyst]

2: Courlander B-S (1837-1965) 1960 SV3 Haht SV3

In the early years of independence, Emperor Henry Christophe in the north and President Pétion in the south tried to stem the disintegration of the magnificent plantations. Christophe's measures in the region he controlled were sometimes stern, according to legend; but the plantation system and the plantations themselves gradually fell into decay, along with the aqueducts, the warehouses, and the sugar mills. For the Haitian had returned to a tradition of landholding antedating his enslavement.

Europe's loss of the Pearl of the Antilles aroused bitter words from Frenchmen and Englishmen for the better part of the century. They accused the Negro of laziness and lack of ability, repeating endlessly that only as a colony could Haiti ever be of any use to anybody. The London *Times* deplored the Haitian's unwillingness to work for wages, speculating that he had "no desire for property strong enough to induce him to labor with sustained power." In the United States, antiabolitionist enthusiasts cited the Haitian situation as an example of what would happen to the American economy if the slaves were freed.

The Haitian's reluctance to work for wages did not reflect an aversion to owning property, however, as the London *Times* supposed. On the contrary, it was engendered by his desire for property. The land was there and waiting, only needing a house to be built upon it, and to be cleared and tilled. The typical Haitian wanted not dubious, seasonal wage work but a farm of his own. The more ambitious peasant aspired to two farms, or even three, with a homestead and a family on each.

If a man worked hard and made a success of one plot, he could put away money and eventually buy a second. The additional land might be separated by some miles from the original farm. On the new ground the man would build another house and take another wife to take care of it in his absence. Known as *plaçage*, this arrangement had complete community sanction. A man whose energies and good fortune made an extra household possible was expected to make such an arrangement. It was not a new institution bred in the chaos following the Revolution, nor was it, as some missionaries held, an evidence of moral deterioration of the Haitian character. It was simply a persisting concept of West African life.[2] The woman who occupied the second or third household was not a concubine. Like the first wife, she had enhanced prestige in her community. She had authority and responsibility. Her work, her position, and her rewards were not essentially different from those of the first wife.[3] It is true that her marriage was not consecrated by a church or civil ceremony, but, ordinarily, neither was that of the first wife. Contrary to European misconceptions, such unions were true marriages in the sense that they had full sanction of the community.

[Footnotes appear in Category 116, pp. 351-352. --Analyst]

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

565 *caste* is the only word to describe the effective separation of aristocrats from the masses. The caste system is a vivid fact, for it regulates a person's profession, speech, religion, marriage, family life, politics, clothes, social mobility—in short, his whole life from cradle to grave.

175 648 Haiti won its freedom from the France of Napoleon in 1804, becoming thus the second independent state in the Western Hemisphere. It had been during the eighteenth century France's most prosperous colony, its wealth depending upon slavery and the plantation system. With the whites driven out, social distinctions which actually had their roots in colonial times began immediately to develop among the people, all of whom had some proportion of African blood in their veins. During the course of the next century the criteria for aristocracy slowly assumed recognizable form, so that now even the most casual observer is aware that Haiti cannot by any stretch of the imagination be called a democratic country, with an open class system. The two castes are the élite and the masses. They are as different as day from night, as nobleman from peasant; and they are as separate as oil and water. The élite are generally reckoned to compose at the outside not more than three per cent of the population.

565 642 [162]

565 463 [161] The élite do not work with their hands. This is the cardinal rule of Haitian society. Upon it rests the whole economic structure of the country, and to this the course of national history has led. All the professions, most governmental and military offices, and the large business enterprises are effectively closed to young men of the masses. Indeed, so completely accepted are caste rules, so practically difficult would it be for peasant youths to acquire the money and education necessary for such careers, that at birth a boy's future place in economic life is, within narrow limits, already predetermined. For the élite, law is the most popular of the professions, partly because it is the quickest avenue of approach to high political office; government, in turn, is the only career which can make a man rich within a few years. Next in popularity to law comes medicine. Teaching is not lucrative enough to attract many promising youths, and the priests of the Roman Catholic Church are almost all white Frenchmen.[2]

783 797 2. An effort was once made by the Catholic Church to train native Haitian priests, but the prelates would have none of them after they were ordained. They drove them out, saying, "Go away! How do you expect God to listen to you? You are not white; you don't know anything." And the Haitian priests had to be transferred as missionaries to Africa.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
SV3 Haiti SV3

The men seldom or never go to mass, except on the days particularly set apart by the government as public fêtes. On these occasions the president and all the officers of Hayti go in procession, but the idea of devotion, I believe, never enters their contemplation. Such days are merely set aside for celebrating some particular event, which it is wished should be handed down to posterity. These occasions present only the external symbol of religion, the whole people being either ignorant or careless of its real character. Their manner and appearance during the celebration of the mass shew that they have no inward feelings of piety or devotion.[13]

Catholicism in Haiti, then, had fallen on evil days; Protestantism, on the other hand, was unable to gain any foothold. Boyer, indifferent to all religion, did not even care to tolerate Wesleyan missionaries as Pétion had done, for when certain of them arrived and were met with "persecution and stoning by a mob," it required persuasion to gain his assent to freeing those the police had taken into custody. He forbade any further meetings of Wesleyans, on the ground that they stirred up riots. At the close of Boyer's administration it was estimated that there were only about 1,200 Protestants in the country, mostly Methodists and Baptists, and these primarily Negroes who had come from the United States to settle in the republic.

Although the Haitian government probably derived a certain satisfaction from controlling a state Church, Boyer was impelled both by circumstance and his own temperament to obtain the approval of the Holy See. His own tepid spiritual zeal had nothing to do with the case; Haitian public order would benefit by a superior group of priests, and Haitian prestige would rise, he thought, with recognition by Rome. Having already in 1826 settled the conflict between France and Haiti in the political sphere, Boyer tried assiduously to end the schism from Rome. His propositions were examined with benevolence by the Pope, who conferred upon the primate of the Indies, archbishop of Santo Domingo, the title of archbishop of Haiti. This personage, however, was a Spaniard already established in the comfortable city of Santo Domingo amidst people of his own nationality. He could not be persuaded to move to Port-au-Prince. The failure of Boyer's efforts is due more to this ecclesiastic than to uncoöperativeness on the part of Rome. From 1834 to 1860 the Court of Rome had official representatives in Haiti, but they cannot have been very effective men, for conditions in

13. James Franklin, *The Present State of Hayti*, pp. 394–395.

3: Leyburn Z-4, 5 (no date) 1966
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565 771 ing since 1860 has had its effect upon the children of the upper classes. Two hundred churchmen working with a population of more than two million cannot distribute their benefits equally. Teachers must devote themselves to those whose minds are educable, who have access to schools, and who can afford time for daily classes. An element of social snobbishness entered as well. Catholicism was socially accepted in the Western World whose approval the élite coveted, where Vodun if known at all was regarded as a mere superstition. To prove his separation from the peasant black, the élite person was therefore Catholic or nothing.

●[797] It would have required many times two hundred teaching brothers and sisters, all with the zeal of fanatics and the energy of dynamos, to convert the masses away from Vodun. In acquainting the peasants with Church forms and certain beliefs the priests have been entirely successful; in making exclusive Catholics of them they have had no success at all.

771 177 Every vital social institution is continually in a process of change. Vodun, a very living faith, has steadily borrowed more and more from Catholicism, the only other religion with which the people come in close contact. When one can go from a Saturday night Vodun sacrifice and dance to a Sunday morning Catholic Mass with no feeling of incongruity, it is obvious that the minds of the worshipers are actively predisposed to assimilation of creed and ritual.

796 We have suggested in a previous chapter some traces of the Catholic Mass in Vodun ceremony. The Vodun service regularly begins with a long ritual which the observer who knows both the Créole language and the Catholic liturgy recognizes as being almost entirely Roman. While the Vodun houngan sits quietly by, a special officiant known as the *prêt' savanne* (bush priest) reads or pretends to read from the Catholic prayer book. For the Pater Noster, the creed, the Ave Maria, the Salve Regina, and the prayers, the worshipers kneel or stand as they would in church. Candles burn, water is sprinkled, the sign of the cross is made, the chants are sung. When the benediction completes this part of the service, the houngan takes over to conduct the purely African rites; yet his first words are, "*Grâce mise'-corde,*" and many Catholic interpolations appear even in this second part of the service.

[778] [192] The Vodun ritual is conducted before an altar, in Haitian Créole called a "trône," which is a perfect marriage between Vodun and

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marvelously aided in distress. The priest, not willing to allow even this "delusion," tried to cut down the tree but was wounded by his own machete. Eventually, however, the tree was destroyed by natural causes, and a church erected on the site. Fire destroyed the church. Each successive church building has likewise been destroyed, by fire or by lightning. No longer now does the Catholic Church combat the sanctity of Saut d'Eau: after all, it was the Virgin who appeared, not a loa. The great celebrations on every fifteenth of July draw pilgrims from all over Haiti. Although the Church now grudgingly approves the feast it is still recognizably Vodun in character, for devout souls who bathe in the water are "mounted" by loa. The Church has a hard battle ahead of it to win this festival for Catholicism.

Three factors work in favor of the Catholic struggle to win Haitians completely away from Vodun: the world-wide organization of the Church, which can always throw trained reserves into the battle; the superior intellectual equipment of the priests, enabling them to plan their campaign and use psychological weapons; and the plasticity of Vodun itself, which is a conglomeration of human feelings, ideas, and traditions rather than a rigid sect with an inflexible ritual.[3] Even with these advantages, it is still the battle of a few dozen men on one side with the Haitian masses (more than two million) on the other. So far as one is ever justified in prophecy, it seems safe to assume that Vodun will continue to assimilate more and more fragments of Catholicism; that its appeal will remain so long as education and medicine are not extended to the whole countryside; that eventually—it may be centuries hence—Vodun rites may sink back into the status of living folklore, to which the simple turn in their deepest need.

One of the strongest missionary advantages of the Roman Catholic Church has been the breadth given it by two thousand years of experience. In so long a life it has had to be all things to all men; out of necessity it has developed around the central core so wide a variety of belief, doctrine, form, and traditional practice, that there is something for every believer, whether scholarly or untutored, powerfully important or humbly obscure. What the cultivated

3. The absence of any written formulation of Vodun must certainly be a factor in its flexibility. Recorded tradition and written history tend to create definiteness of pattern.

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XV

HAITIAN PROBLEMS

FOR a citizen of the United States or a European country, national problems have to do with external as well as internal affairs. Foreign relations, armaments, international trade, treaties and commitments, loom as large as do unemployment, business depression, labor troubles, and social maladjustment. Political parties rise and fall with their promises or failures to deal successfully with matters arising from the country's position relative to world movements. In Haiti such generalizations do not hold. Her international relations have been and are comparatively minor, while her internal problems have been of a different order from those which trouble most of the rest of the Western World. This is not meant to imply that a world depression leaves Haiti unscathed, or that the country does not suffer when its trade in coffee is interrupted, but rather that its persistent problems would continue to exist whatever the state of world politics and economics.

Contacts of the Haitian people with the outside world between 1804 and 1915 were meagre. The slaughter of whites by Dessalines, the economic decline of the country, unwillingness of white nations to treat with a Negro state, the schism in the Catholic Church, restrictive legislation against white foreigners, general illiteracy of the people—all these shut Haiti off from the world. Christophe, it is true, invited in a few English schoolmasters and agricultural experts, but these remained only a short while and had little influence even among the élite. For a century Haiti saw no foreigners except the few traders at seaports, an occasional Wesleyan missionary, a limited number of consuls and ministers, certain travelers interested in odd corners of the earth, and, after 1860, Catholic priests and sisters. For the peasants there ceased to be any knowledge of the world outside of Haiti; for the élite France once more became the centre of the social universe, as it had been for the affranchis in colonial times. From Boyer's time onward élite youths went to Paris for an education, if they could afford it; the "culture" they acquired there had little relationship to Haitian problems.

Foreign relations, in the political sense, revolved during most of

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for the élite, and was purely cultural. By 1828 there were lower schools in six towns of the country, but only one higher school in the whole of Haiti.[13]

A report on the condition of education in 1842 showed that the Lycée still existed, its curriculum now limited to French, English, Spanish, Latin, mathematics, composition, history, and fencing.[14] Only 150 students were enrolled. By 1843 there were eleven secondary schools. The question was even raised whether Boyer's failure to promote education during the twenty-five tranquil years of his rule might not have been deliberate, on the principle that it is easier to govern ignorance than knowledge.[15] Actually, however, there was little pressure for education, and so Boyer did nothing.

Geffrard more than any other president of the nineteenth century encouraged education, with the result that almost 20,000 children received some kind of schooling. The census of 1875 made the following estimates:[16]

4 lyceums	with	543 pupils
6 girls' high schools		563
5 girls' secondary schools		350
165 primary schools		11,784
200 rural schools		5,939
1 medical school		25
1 school of music		46
Total		19,250 pupils

To these must be added a few pupils in private schools and in the recently established Catholic schools of the Frères de l'Instruction Chrétienne and the Sisters of Cluny.

Toward the turn of the century, when reformers were writing books while the whole country seemed to be slowly dying under its stupid presidents, many a proposal was made which hit squarely upon the need of education and the necessity of a specifically practical curriculum. Joseph Justin[17] urged technical training by experts, and many others hammered away at the same idea. A small sum

13. Charles Mackenzie, *Notes on Hayti*, I, 83, 120–122, 158.
14. John Candler, *Brief Notices of Hayti*, pp. 74 ff.
15. Mark B. Bird, *The Black Man* (New York, 1869), p. 140.
16. Cited by Sir Spenser St. John, *Hayti, or The Black Republic*, p. 293.
17. *Étude sur les institutions haïtiennes* (Paris, 1894–95), 2 vols.